

REMARKS**Response to Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§101 and 102**

Claim 1 was provisionally rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §101 as claiming the same invention as that of claim 1 of copending Application No. 10/648,124. Claim 1 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Carter (U.S. Pat. No. 4,863,470) or alternatively, Sinaiko (U.S. Pat. No. 3,341,417). Applicants have cancelled claim 1 without prejudice, so these rejections are moot.

Response to Double Patenting

Claims 31-35, 42-48 and 55-60 were rejected by the Examiner under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 11-22 of U.S. Patent No. 6,347,241. Claims 36 and 49 were rejected by the Examiner under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 11-22 of U.S. Patent No. 6,347,241 in view of Krag (U.S. Pat. No. 6,363,940). Claims 36, 37, 40, 42-50, 53, and 55-58 were provisionally rejected by the Examiner under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 44-49 of copending Application No. 10/684,124.

In response, applicants have filed concurrently herewith a Terminal Disclaimer (By Attorney) respecting U.S. Patent No. 6,347,241 and copending Application No. 10/684,124. Therefore, applicants believe that the double patenting issue has been mooted.

Response to Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 38, 39, 41, 51, 52, and 54 were objected to by the Examiner as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of patentable subject matter in these claims. However, applicants believe that the claims from which these claims depend are patentable, so these claims are likewise patentable.

Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

The applicants wish to bring to the attention of the Examiner copending application Publication No. 2004/0204660 which has been listed on the attached PTO-1449. A copy of the publication is attached. The new claims filed herein are similar to some of the claims of the publication. Applicants believe that the effective filing date of the present application (02/02/1999) precedes the effective filing date of the publication which is believed to be (06/18/1999). The provisional applications relied upon by the above-identified publication do not support the claims of the publication so the now pending claims of the publication have an effective filing date of 06/18/1999.

Conclusions

Applicants believe that the pending claims are directed to patentable subject matter and respectfully request reconsideration and an early allowance of these claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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